Saw You Standing by botanicapoetica

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Summary:

Harringrove will not let me live. Here is my offering.

Saw You Standing

Dustin would say he was a pretty smart guy. Playing D&D wasn't for dumbasses, and he liked to think all the science experiments he liked so much meant he'd probably be a total genius adult. So Dustin knew that when Max said her brother wasn't 'a total dick anymore', she was telling the truth.

Billy actually had been pretty cool lately, driving all of them to and from the arcade and waiting out their D&D games in Will's driveway until Max was ready to come out. He figured it was penance for beating Steve's face in and scaring the shit out of all of them, but he also knew Billy didn't have to KEEP doing all this stuff.

So when the other guys were busy with other stuff for the night and Billy offered to drive him and Max back to their house, Dustin shrugged and went along with it. But Dustin was smart, so he didn't miss the way Billy's whole body got stiffer when they all passed Max's dad on their way through the house. Max's dad was sitting in an arm chair holding a beer in his hand, which was a pretty normal dad thing to do. But the hardness on his face when, while walking by, he said "Hold up, son." didn't feel normal.

Max ushered Dustin in to her room at a quicker pace, shutting the door behind them. "Maybe we should sneak out and bike to the diner. What do you think?" She asked, going for nonchalant but her eyes were intense. Dustin frowned, confused. "But we just got here...." he began to say when the sound of a chair hitting the floor with a slam came through the door, followed by raised voices.

Dustin could see that Max was embarrassed, but not like she'd tripped in front of him or something. When he heard that Max's dad seemed to be the only one talking, and a wheezing sound that had to be Billy, he understood. But Dustin was smart. He grabbed the phone in Max's room (which was not fair at all, by the way) and dialed Steve, surprised when he answered right after the first ring. "Hey Steve, you need to come get us from Max's house..." Dustin listened for any more fighting but it seemed like Max's dad had gone into the master bedroom and then he continued, "..and we gotta take Billy too." Steve let him know he was on his way and hung up abruptly.

Dustin turned around to tell Max the news, but she wasn't there. He walked out to the living room and found her, talking so quietly he couldn't hear her, an arm around her brother's waist and pulling Billy with her towards the front door. "C'mon, Dustin." She said over her shoulder in her no bullshit tone, and he followed her out the front door and into the driveway where she dumped her brother onto the gravel.

Billy looked kind of spaced out and there was some blood in his ear, but when he seemed to realize where he was his eyes snapped to Max. "You guys have a way to go somewhere else? I can't really..." he trailed off, his eyes looking down to his right hand. It didn't look broken or anything, but Dustin could see it wasn't right, his fingers were too stiff and the whole top of his hand was darker than it should be.

"Yeah, Steve's coming, it's cool." Max said, trying super hard to catch her brother's eyes with her own for some reason. This answer made Billy stiffen again, his head whipping up to look at Max with an accusatory look on his face. Before Dustin could pipe in and maybe (but just maybe, because Billy was still scary as shit) take the blame for calling, Steve's car pulled in front of them. Billy got to his feet, his shoulders pulled back and his expression neutral and unaffected. But Dustin was smart, and he knew that Billy couldn't even curl his right hand into a fist, so he wasn't doing much for himself right now.

"Hey guys, get in the car and I'll be right there." Steve said by way of greeting, and him and Max piled in with no argument. Dustin watched through the windshield as Steve frowned, his Mom Face in full effect, and held up Billy's hand for inspection. Billy gritted his teeth at Steve, saying something he couldn't hear but glancing purposefully toward the car. Steve shook his head and came to hold Billy's bad hand in both of his. Billy seemed uncomfortable until Steve must've said something because his shoulders slumped and he hung his head forward. Steve turned him around by the shoulder and started ushering him towards the car with a decidedly Not Mom Look on his face. This one was way sappier, like, Olivia Newton John sappy and-

Oh. Okay.

Dustin was smart, but he guessed there were still some things he didn’t know.

Author's Note:

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> aka my new dump site for billy hargrove tears